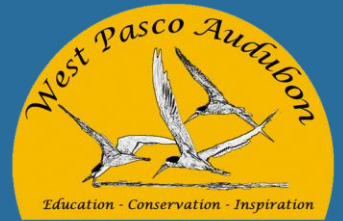


Sunwest Park



ABOUT

Sunwest Park is a recreational facility in northwest Pasco, just off of Hwy 19. The park has been developed around a former limestone mine, known locally as "SunWest Mines." The main park lake is 70 acres and is spring-fed. A smaller lake is situated to the west of the main lake. A sandy beach lines the east and south sides of the main lake, while a footpath heads west along the north side. Paralleling the path runs a canal that leads out to Fillman Bayou and the Gulf, where manatees are often seen in winter, with another former mine lake farther north of the canal (soon to be developed).

EBird has logged 193 species recorded at this location as of writing this guide.

BIRDS

Lesser and Greater Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Redhead; Forster's, Least, Sandwich, Royal and Caspian Terns; Bonaparte's Gulls, Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls; Wilson's Plover, Short-billed Dowitcher, Peep Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstone, Willets

eBird hotspot link:
<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L4013926>

DIRECTIONS

From US 19 turn west at Phelps Road (about 3 miles north of 52). Bear right onto Racetrack, then left on Old Dixie Highway
17362 Old Dixie Hwy. Hudson, FL 34667

FACILITIES

Parking lot (\$5 for the day; annual pass for \$30 available at Veterans Park). Restroom facilities, paths, trails, covered picnic tables. Kayak launch.



TIPS

For several years now, the main park lake has been a great place to view winter ducks. While the majority are fairly common, Greater Scaup are found here fairly frequently, and less common species such as Goldeneye have visited occasionally. However, as the mine ceased to use the lake to the north of the park, ducks are increasingly moving there - making viewing and IDing them more of a challenge and increasing the need for a scope. Swan Geese have long lived on the mine lake, along with Graylag hybrids and other domestic ducks.

Shorebirds, Gulls and Terns are most often found about an hour before high tide at the northernmost beach, near the maintenance buildings and bathrooms. This can be a stopping point for migrants in the Spring and Fall - Baird's, White-rumped, and Pectoral Sandpipers have all been found here, as have American Avocet, Black Terns, and Gull-billed Terns. As Pasco has little by way of beaches, this facility plays an important role for both birds and birders. Arrive early and avoid weekends, as birds are driven away by beachgoers and waterpark visitors.

It is worth walking the path alongside the canal, as the north shore of the lake can host shorebirds (a Whimbrel has recently become a regular visitor). The vegetation along the canal provides habitat for warblers and sparrows, while the canal itself is popular with waders and Spotted Sandpiper.



Aripeka Sandhills is just a short distance to the north, and can be reached via Old Dixie Highway, although the distance between the two is currently unpaved, and some birders may prefer to drive around via US19. Aripeka Sandhills is a known migrant trap, with trails known for warblers and flycatchers. Please see the guide for this location for more specific information. To the south is Hudson Beach, and a great place to Gulf-watch for pelagics after a storm, to find shorebirds at low tide, and see Loons, Grebes etc. during the winter months.

